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ABSTRACT

A two-year study was conducted which concentrated on the problems adversely affecting the administration and operation of vocational education program activities conducted by the United States Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education. Data were obtained primarily through structured personal interview schedules with free options to explore responses and structured questionnaires with open-ended items. All Bureau program specialists and supervisors were invited to participate. In states chosen by stratified random sample, two surveys were conducted with state directors and supervisors of vocational education. As a result of the study, substantial problems affecting the administration and operation of the Bureau were found. Findings and conclusions were placed in nine categories: national commitment; mission statement; structure; staffing; operational planning system; internal and external communication and cooperation; technical assistance; personnel development; and functional activities. It was concluded that the administration of programs and services to the states would be improved by (1) obtaining a national commitment to vocational education; (2) developing, through a master plan, the structure, staffing pattern, and staff development needed to support that plan; and (3) establishing and maintaining a strong federal-state-local working relationship based on technical assistance and a responsive two-way communications network. (BM)

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NACVE

A STUDY OF THE ADMINISTRATION, OPERATION, AND PROGRAM SERVICES OF VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education
U.S. Office of Education

Executive Summary

From The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education
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A Report by the
National Advisory Council
On Vocational Education

December, 1978

CE 022 381

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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In addition, the National Advisory Council is mandated to provide technical assistance and leadership to State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education, in order to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

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NACVE

December 28, 1979

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer
Commissioner of Education
Department of Health, Education & Welfare
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Room 4181D
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Commissioner Boyer:

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, in accordance with the mandates in Public Law 94-482, is pleased to submit this report on the administration and operation of and the programmatic services provided by the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education.

One of the important findings of this study, conducted over a two year period, is the failure of major policy makers to establish a national commitment to vocational education that would favorably influence the development of programs under Public Law 94-482. Of equal concern is the Bureau's need for more qualified professionals. Although we realize that the size of the Bureau's staff was increased in September, 1978, the Council does not believe that these employees have adequate experience and expertise in vocational education.

Furthermore, while this report provides an understanding of some of the fundamental problems affecting the Bureau's operations, the other changes that occurred in the Bureau during and subsequent to the study period will modify some of the observations. The report should be read in this context.

Nevertheless, the findings of the study suggest the importance of further analysis of the Bureau. Accordingly, the Council has chosen to focus its efforts over the next two years on a "Reassessment of the Federal Role in Vocational Education." Such a focus will enable us to further examine the issues and concerns surfaced in the report. Along with other agencies, organizations, and individuals, we shall attempt to develop a framework for a human resource development policy, encompassing, but not limited to, traditional vocational education programs and concerns.

The Council will continue to conscientiously fulfill its mandates. We shall provide you, the President, the Secretary, and Congress with the results and recommendations of further studies conducted in fiscal years 1979 and 1980.

Respectfully yours,

John W. Thiele

John W. Thiele
Chairperson

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INTRODUCTION

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, in accordance with the mandates of the Education Amendments of 1968 and 1976 (P.L. 94-482, Title II, Section 162(b)(1) and (2)), conducted a study of the Office of Education's Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (the Bureau).

The overall focus of the Council's study was to identify and categorize the problems in the Bureau which interfered with the administration and operation of programmatic services for vocational education. After the problems had been examined, recommendations to bring about the effective management and delivery of vocational education programs and services were to be made to the Office of Education.

Implied in the study design was the belief that the effectiveness of a mutually beneficial and supportive federal-state-local relationship depended, in large measure, on the level and quality of federal guidance and technical assistance to the states. In its absence, the expansion and improvement of federally-supported programs and services was diminished and innovation minimized. More appropriately, federal activities should be designed to encourage coordinated state efforts to provide ready access to quality vocational education for people of all ages in all communities.

Interest in conducting the study was prompted by several circumstances suggesting the problems that adversely affected the Bureau's activities. First, the General Accounting Office reported in "What is the Role of Federal Assistance for Vocational Education?," 1974, that the Office of Education did not provide adequate guidance to states to help ensure that the purposes of the law as envisioned by Congress would be accomplished. Second, vocational educators criticized the Bureau for not providing sustained direction and leadership for vocational education. Third, Congressional staff expressed concern about the extent of the Bureau's plans to implement provisions of the 1976 Amendments. And, fourth, in the last ten years, the administrations' fiscal policies have given low priority to vocational education.

After the first year of the study, begun in September, 1976, an interim report, highlighting several problems in such areas as the Bureau's structure, staffing, Operational Planning System, and external factors, was prepared and distributed. Specific observations of each of these problems were presented and the Bureau was informally invited to reply to them. Since there was no response from the Bureau, the study proceeded to a second phase with the assumption that those observations were accurate.

During the second phase, nine substudies were conducted to verify whether the problems identified in the Interim Report could be generalized to the Bureau as a whole. They were also designed to determine the effects of these and other problems on programmatic services to state personnel.

Two major changes occurred during the latter phase of the study which will have an impact on the identified problems. First, the Civil Service Reform Act, passed in October, 1978, will affect those employment procedures which were not responsive to the personnel needs of the Bureau. Second, a new Deputy Commissioner (designee), appointed in September, 1978, initiated changes which will reorient the management procedures of the Bureau through the development of a master plan and the revision of the Mission Statement.

Although the study focused on problems, the Council wishes to emphasize that there were many meaningful activities carried out by the Bureau staff. In spite of the problems, the staff continued their efforts to improve vocational education programs. The information found in this study should be used, not to evaluate the performance of any individual staff member but, to view the organization as an entity in transition, adjusting to the demands and requirements of Public Law 94-482. The Council acknowledges the helpfulness of those who so willingly participated in the study. Without their cooperation, the preparation of this report would have been very difficult.

METHODOLOGY

In pursuit of its responsibility, the Council approved the study of the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education, to be conducted during a two-year period. The study concentrated on a broad range of problems that were adversely affecting the administration and operation of vocational education program activities conducted by the Bureau.

General Accounting Office reports suggested that there were problems lessening the Bureau's effectiveness and leadership. A 1972 General Accounting Office report called upon the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to have the Department's regional offices monitor more closely the use of funds for the educationally disadvantaged and to coordinate the efforts of the Department and the states in obtaining the kinds of information that could be used to properly evaluate programs. A more prescriptive General Accounting Office report published in 1974, recommended that the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare take specific actions to improve practices in planning programs, distributing funds, using resources, and relating employment to training. Prior to the passage of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, Congressional hearings exposed the irregular pursuit of these recommendations. The Amendments sought, in part, to remedy the situation by emphasizing processes and procedures in order to implement vocational education at the national, state, and local levels.

The Council established a Task Force to conduct a study of the Bureau's operational response to the Amendments. The Task Force drafted the methodology and procedures for Phase I--Fiscal Year 1976-77 and Phase II--Fiscal Year 1977-78. The study used descriptive research to identify and characterize the problems impinging on the administration and operation of the Bureau and the consequent effects on programmatic services to the states. The case study survey was determined to be the most practical and efficient method for gathering a broad array of data on those problems. The study design regarded the Bureau as an entity within which interactions and interrelationships influenced the behavior of the organization and its subparts.

In order to understand the Bureau's internal and external relationships and any attendant problems, two research questions were developed. One asked whether there were problems with the administration and/or operation of the Bureau which hindered it from carrying out its activities. The second question asked whether the Bureau was fulfilling the function of assisting states in implementing vocational education by providing them with the necessary programmatic and functional services.

Data were obtained primarily through structured personal interview schedules with free options to explore responses and structured

questionnaires with open-ended items. Instruments were pilot-tested, revised, and used by Task Force members and staff to conduct the interviews. Four of five participant substudies assured anonymity to the respondents. The one exception advised the respondents that although the information they provided would be paraphrased, it was probable that their answers could be identified. All Bureau program specialists and supervisors were invited to participate. In states chosen by stratified random sample, two surveys were conducted with state directors and supervisors of vocational education.

A feasibility study and a total of nine substudies designed to provide insight into or replication of facts related to the problems confronting the Bureau were completed. Supplementary documentation from a variety of sources was analyzed and incorporated into the study.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this study, the Council found substantial problems affecting the administration and operation of the Bureau. The Council concluded from the problems, grouped into nine categories, that the administration of programs and services to the states would be improved by (a) obtaining a national commitment to vocational education; (b) developing, through a master plan, the structure, staffing pattern, and staff development needed to support that plan; and, (c) establishing and maintaining a strong federal-state-local working relationship based on technical assistance and a responsive two-way communications network. This relationship would encourage all levels of government to assist in executing the goals and priorities of a master plan.

The nine categories for which findings and conclusions are presented are: National Commitment, Mission Statement, Structure, Staffing, Operational Planning System, Internal and External Communication and Cooperation, Technical Assistance, Personnel Development, and Functional Activities.

NATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Council found a pattern in the activities performed by administrative officials, indicating a general lack of support for vocational education. When, in 1963 and 1968, Congress made substantial changes in the federal operation of vocational education, the Office of Education made no corresponding alterations in its organizational structure. By an act of Congress in 1972, the position of Deputy Commissioner for Vocational Education, reporting directly to the Commissioner of Education, was finally created. However, during the critical period for initial implementation of the 1976 Education Amendments, this position was filled by an acting deputy. Even though Congress detailed the specific responsibilities and expanded services through these Amendments, the Administration requested budget cuts for vocational education in fiscal years 1979 and 1980. Further, materials without adequate support data from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Office of Education, suggested that vocational programs did not contribute to the quality of students' economic progress.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that federal administrators had not made a substantive commitment to vocational education. It appeared that the lack of commitment had caused an erosion in the confidence and morale of the Bureau staff. A positive intervention by the Commissioner of Education is needed to emphasize a commitment to improved programming.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Council found that the Bureau's Mission Statement was inadequate as a primary management document for the following reasons: (a) although the missions of each organizational unit were well presented, the Statement could not lend itself to the development of a plan addressing long-range priorities; (b) the goals and priority issues for which the Bureau would be held accountable were not clearly identified; (c) existing inter- and intra-agency agreements, and the linking of the resources needed to achieve objectives, were not specified; (d) within the Bureau, the coordination of resources to effect change in particular areas was not made evident; (e) the Mission Statement did not accurately depict the extent of the activities performed by the units because some missions were not incorporated into the Operational Planning System; and, (f) the Mission Statement did not provide operational definitions of technical assistance and leadership.

Conclusions. The Council concluded that the Bureau's Mission Statement needed a comprehensive revision which would be the basis for the development of a master plan addressing priorities and supporting a national policy. A formal endorsement by the Commissioner of Education of the Master Plan and the Mission Statement will be needed.

STRUCTURE

The Council found that the existing structure of the Bureau required improvement for the following reasons: (a) the units of Consumer, Metric, and Community Education were not incorporated into the activities of the Bureau; (b) the planning roles of the Office of Occupational Planning, the Planning Office, and the Division of State Vocational Program Operations were not well-delineated, causing duplication and confusion of responsibilities (especially in policy planning for programs, evaluation, information analysis, and allocation of funds for programs); (c) a comprehensive information system within the structure was needed to satisfy Bureau program planning and budgeting needs and to answer constituent inquiries; (d) the development of a master plan will probably necessitate a restructuring of the Bureau to carry out the priority of increased assistance to state and local education agencies; and, (e) the possible benefits of reorganization needed to be documented and evaluated.

Conclusions. The Council concluded that there was a need for a reorganization in order to: (a) incorporate into the Bureau all assigned units and their resources; (b) delegate the functions of policy planning in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and confusion among the Office of Occupational Planning, the Planning

Office, and the Division of State Vocational Program Operations; and, (c) maintain the flexibility needed to adapt to a new form of governance and new legislative initiatives. An internal system to evaluate the effects of reorganization was also needed (see Operational Planning System).

STAFFING

The Council found that there were several factors adversely affecting proper and adequate staffing of the Bureau. Although a Congressional mandate increased the staff ceiling by 68 positions in fiscal year 1978, the Bureau filled only 20 percent of those positions. Further, as of the summer of 1978, the Bureau was staffed at 60 percent of its total personnel authorization. While ceiling levels for the Division of Vocational-Technical Education and the Division of Research and Demonstration were increased, the actual number of staff decreased, putting them significantly below their allotments. A shortage of clerical staff existed in such units as the Planning Office and the Division of Research and Demonstration. Furthermore, the number of vacant clerical positions in all units required continuous monitoring to maintain an adequate staff load. The Work Measurement System did not adequately identify the actual personnel needs of the Bureau.

Conclusions. Insufficient staffing throughout the Bureau and especially in the Division of Vocational-Technical Education and the Division of Research and Demonstration adversely affected the quality and quantity of assistance to the states. An improvement in the Work Measurement System is needed.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM

The Council found that there was confusion among the Bureau staff about the purpose of the Operational Planning System. While some managers used it as a management tool for evaluation, most staff members regarded it primarily as a planning mechanism. Further problems arose because systems for performance evaluation and internal planning had not been perfected. (The need for such systems would become more apparent if a new management orientation were adopted as recommended in the Mission Statement section.)

Conclusion. The Council concluded that misconceptions about the Operational Planning System tended to nullify its effectiveness. The Bureau needed an improved system to evaluate individual and unit performance and to outline year-to-year operations according to goals and priorities specified in a master plan.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

The Council found that the Bureau did not have a satisfactory system for providing internal and external communication and cooperation. Information was not well-channeled within the Bureau, and the supply to state and local educators was inadequate. Intra- and inter-agency agreements were not made part of the Bureau's planning system and there was no evidence that the Bureau staff or vocational educators knew of such working relationships and the kinds of assistance that might result from them. (Fourteen agreements were reviewed by the Council but other areas existed where such agreements might be established.) Information about staff responsibilities and Bureau activities was not systematically distributed to the field. In addition, there was no formal mechanism from which to obtain input on problems or research priorities from the field.

Conclusions. The Council concluded that the message content, the frequency, the various media, and the feedback from the Bureau's internal and external communications were inadequate. Without a continuous flow of meaningful information, units tended to become isolated. Efforts to promote inter-agency cooperation through agreements had been made, but follow-up on such arrangements was uneven.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Council found that programmatic and functional assistance and leadership to the states from the Bureau was inadequate. The Bureau's prohibition on staff attendance at state or regional meetings inhibited the creation of a feedback system to help in the determination of priorities and legislation. The absence of leadership within the Bureau prevented coordination and cooperation with the states and thwarted the development of a strong federal-state-local relationship.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that although technical assistance and leadership were critical factors in establishing and maintaining a strong federal-state-local relationship, they had been neglected.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The Council found that personnel development within the Bureau was insufficient. More in-service activities were needed to improve job competencies, human relations, and attitudes. In addition,

staff development will be needed to help implement the recommendations presented in this study. A competent staff will be needed to conduct technical assistance, use a revised Operational Planning System, and help evaluate the impact of the assistance to state and local agencies.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that there was a need for a more effective staff development program.

FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Council found that the functional activities of evaluation, CETA coordination, and research were inadequate for the following reasons:

(a) The number of quality review packages used in the Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality activities was insufficient. The quality reviews were limited to functional areas and did not include program disciplines.

(b) Although the Bureau was responsible for the manpower training and development functions of the Office of Education (P.L. 94-482, Title II, Section 160(a)(2)), the responsibilities of the CETA Unit in relation to the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project were not clearly defined. The Unit's activities were limited primarily to gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information, and did not provide on-site, technical assistance to educational agencies or to prime sponsors.

(c) The Division of Research and Demonstration did not keep State Research Coordinating Units adequately informed about its activities or the development of priorities. Enough time was not allowed for states to respond to Requests for Proposals. Dissemination for effective utilization of information and products was inadequate. In addition, the Coordinating Committee on Research had not fulfilled its mandated responsibilities. There was no formal mechanism within the Division with which to track, interpret, and disseminate vocational education research activities conducted by other agencies. There was no continuing, long-term effort to concentrate discretionary funds (from research through dissemination) on national priorities. The Joint Agreement between the Commissioners of Education and Indian Affairs required by Public Law 95-40 could not be implemented without their authorizations. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs had not authorized the agreement.

Conclusion. The Council concluded that the functions of evaluation, CETA coordination with vocational education, and research, and their influence on state and local operations, had not been developed to their potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANTICIPATED RESULTS

Based on the Findings and Conclusions outlined in the preceding section, the Council recommends the following to improve the administration and operation of the Bureau. The Council believes that favorable action on the recommendations will facilitate the delivery of vocational education. The anticipated results from the implementation of the recommendations are also described.

NATIONAL COMMITMENT

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Commissioner of Education:

- Endorse the Bureau's Master Plan including a revised mission statement and distribute it as widely as possible.

Anticipated Results. The outcome of such a recommendation could have far-reaching consequences. An endorsement by the Commissioner would result in: (a) A long-term commitment of funds and personnel to the goals and activities made explicit in the Master Plan and the Mission Statement; (b) The participation of vocational education in any national dialogue on the goals and priorities of American education (the Council of Chief State School Officers in November, 1978, called upon the Commissioner to create a National Commission on Educational Goals and Priorities); (c) An increase in the attention commanded by inter- and intra-agency agreements; (d) The establishment of productive working linkages with units such as International Education and Teacher Corps; (e) A restructuring of the Commissioner's Annual Report, making more explicit the contribution of vocational education to the overall educational effort; and, (f) The development and distribution of a national policy statement related to the endorsement of the Master Plan.

MISSION STATEMENT

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Commissioner of Education, acting through the Bureau:

- Revise the Mission Statement and make it part of a master plan specifying the goals, priorities, and activities related to the mandates of Public Law 94-482 and other relevant legislation.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from the revision of the Mission Statement: (a) An identification of and emphasis on priority issues rather than activities of organizational units; (b) The preparation of a master plan that commits future resources to long-range priority issues; (c) A delineation of the operational authority and accountability of Bureau units; (d) A designation of the responsibility for managing inter- and intra-agency agreements; (e) A clarification of the role of technical assistance and the operational meaning of leadership; and, (f) An improvement in the frequency, format, and availability of information to the field concerning each unit's activities and products.

STRUCTURE

Recommendations

The Council recommends that:

- The Commissioner of Education, acting through the Bureau, develop an organizational structure to support the Master Plan and Mission Statement. (A structure with functional designations should be considered in order to carry out the Master Plan and to adapt to legislative initiatives. For example, a unit could be designed to comprehensively manage information and documentation or a special populations unit could be created to help states provide better services to the disadvantaged, handicapped, bilingual, and displaced homemakers.)

- The Bureau acquire the services of a group of impartial experts to conduct, in order to clarify responsibilities, an analysis of the program evaluation and planning functions of the Office of Occupational Planning and the Planning Office and the efforts of the Division of State Vocational Program Operations.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from the implementation of the recommendations: (a) The resources of all Bureau units would be used to fulfill the goals, priorities, and activities specified in the Master Plan; (b) A reorganizaed Bureau would be able to adapt to future changes without requiring large-scale restructuring; (c) The evaluations of Bureau programs would be coordinated in an appropriate unit; and (d) The planning requirements of the Bureau and the specific responsibilities of its units for planning assistance to the states would be clarified.

STAFFING

Recommendations

The Council recommends that:

- The Commissioner, acting through the Bureau, fill the 57 positions remaining from the 68 mandated through the law, and further, lend his support in filling these positions without delay. (The Council acknowedges the freezes placed on employment and other personnel restrictions.)

- The Bureau negotiate procedures, exemptions, or alternatives within the freeze on personnel in order to employ qualified secretarial and clerical staff and professionals with expertise in vocational education.

- The Bureau give priority attention to staffing the Divisions of Vocational-Technical Education and Research and Demonstration and, in particular, make more professionals available to staff programmatic areas (Trade and Industry, Business and Office Education, and other recognized disciplines) and specific functional areas (evaluation, CETA, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped).

- The Bureau develop, in concert with personnel from the Office of Management and Budget, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Office of Education, and separately implement, an improved Work Measurement System.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from changes in the staffing pattern: (a) The problems of excessive workloads and special assignments would be minimized; (b) Personnel qualified by experience and training would be able to provide regular programmatic and functional services to the states to assist them in improving and expanding vocational education; (c) As services to the field are increased, at least two qualified professionals would be needed to staff each of the programmatic areas; and, (d) Expense funds would be allocated to such personnel as part of the internal planning of activities.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Establish a system that separately provides for:

(1) managerial planning and the evaluation of that planning; and, (2) evaluation of the effectiveness of services to the states in bringing about an improvement in the delivery of vocational education.

Anticipated Results. The following would result from the creation of this system: (a) The Bureau's critical need for performance criteria for managers, supervisors, and operational staff would become evident; (b) Bureau services would be appraised by the manner and extent to which they achieved stated objectives, met expectations of state and local vocational educators, produced unexpected consequences, and assisted in future policy and decision-making; and, (c) The managerial planning system would be able to incorporate and provide for the implementation of the recommendations of this and other studies.

Furthermore, a revised managerial planning system could be integrated into an improved work measurement system that would accurately describe personnel needs. Information about plans could be distributed to state and local vocational education personnel to outline for them the extent and concentration of Bureau activities.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Establish and maintain a formal internal and external communications network to supply timely and continuous information to the Bureau staff and to state and local vocational educators and to obtain feedback from the field.

Anticipated Results. Implementation of this recommendation would result in a widespread change in the kinds, frequency, and content of information disseminated internally and externally, so that, for example, a state advisory council would automatically receive notice of research awards made in the state. An overview of the goals, priorities, organization, staff assignments, and available resources, including technical assistance, could be published periodically and sent to the field. (This publication would contain information more extensive than that found in the Commissioner's Annual Report.) A yearly comprehensive report on the status of vocational education could present and discuss the changes brought about through a federal-state-local collaboration and any anticipated or encountered problems. Inter- and intra-agency agreements represent a unique form of networking and cooperation. Resources

needed to put such agreements into effect would become part of the internal managerial planning and accountability process.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Commissioner, acting through the Bureau:

- Establish and adequately fund an operational procedure for technical assistance which would allow specialists to participate in state and regional meetings and make on-site visits, emphasizing services to community and junior colleges and adult vocational education programs.

Anticipated Results. The implementation of the Council's recommendation would bring about: (a) An adjustment in the allocation of expense funds; (b) A delegation of the responsibility for conducting technical assistance as part of the Master Plan; (c) The development of instruments to give specialists an opportunity to demonstrate the impact of their technical assistance and leadership efforts; (d) The provision of continuous assistance by program specialists to state and local agencies in the areas of their programmatic or functional expertise (specifically, in the recognized program disciplines and in such functional areas as state and local planning; programming for the disadvantaged, the handicapped, and displaced homemakers; program evaluation; research development, demonstration and distribution; and state formulation for the distribution of funds); (e) The development of well-defined technical assistance plans; and, (f) The evaluation of the effectiveness of technical assistance plans and procedures.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Initiate a staff development program to improve supervisory practices, human relations, communication, intra-agency coordination of activities, technical assistance and leadership skills, and the administration of a revised Operational Planning System.

Anticipated Results. Implementation of the recommendation would improve productivity and intra-agency coordination and provide

additional feedback on the needs of the staff. Also, the staff of the Office of the Commissioner could be consulted for expert advice on organizational development and training.

FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recommendations

The Council recommends that the Bureau:

- Expand the scope of the Management Evaluation Review for Compliance and Quality by increasing the number of quality reviews to such areas as CETA coordination with vocational education, youth organizations, teacher and ancillary-staff preparation, state and local advisory councils, and guidance and counseling.

- Expand the activities of the CETA Unit in order to complement the new initiatives and linkages resulting from the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretaries of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare (March, 1978) and new CETA legislation (P.L. 95-524).

- In conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, develop and implement the mandated requirements to establish a joint agreement and plan for programs for Indian vocational education.

- Through the Division of Research and Demonstration:

  (a) establish a more effective communications network with state personnel for planning and coordinating both priorities and activities for improvement in programs and dissemination practices, and for allowing more time for states to respond to Requests for Proposals;

  (b) provide technical assistance for all Research Coordinating Unit activities, in particular, the development of studies analyzing impact of efforts;

  (c) implement the mandated requirements to develop a plan for national research priorities and a system for management research information;

  (d) provide leadership in guiding, organizing, tracking, interpreting, and disseminating the results of federal and state research projects; and,

(e) concentrate and coordinate sufficient long-term resources for research, demonstration, guidance, and curriculum and personnel development to address specific national priorities until substantial results are achieved.

Anticipated Results. The follow would result from the implementation of the recommendations: (a) The roles and responsibilities of the three units would be expanded; (b) A large, qualified staff would be needed to adapt to the expanded responsibilities, including outreach and networking; and, (c) The Division of Research and Demonstration would be responsible for the coordination of all the Bureau's research efforts.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Finally, the Council requests that:

- The Commissioner of Education prepare an annual progress report on action taken to carry out the recommendations herein set forth.

Although the Council's study considered many problems within the Bureau, it must be remembered that there were other issues that could not be examined due to the limits of time and funding. For example, the allocation and distribution of salary and expense funds, the establishment of the budget, the process and follow-up of state plan analysis, and the recruitment and employment of qualified personnel were four important activities which should be studied. Nevertheless, the Council believes that decisive action on the nine examined problems will improve the workings of the Bureau.

It must be emphasized that the problems impairing the effective functioning of the Bureau are interrelated. In order to bring about an improvement in the administration and delivery of vocational education, the recommendations must be acted upon together. No one recommendation will be able to effect all the necessary changes. Only through comprehensive action will the recommendations increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bureau and lead to the improvement and expansion of vocational education. It is vital to the American system of education that an organization be developed which will move forward, not only to improve existing activities, but to fulfill the goals of vocational education through a clear vision, a new framework, and a firm national commitment from the Administration to match Congressional support.